STATE OF ILLINOIS
ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Joint Submission for Arbitration of the Amended Plan of Record For Operations Support Systems ("OSS")	)))	Docket No. 00-0592

EXCEPTIONS OF AMERITECH ILLINOIS

TO HEARING EXAMINER'S PROPOSED ORDER

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This proceeding arises from Condition 29 of the Commission's Order in Docket 98-0555, which approved the merger of Ameritech and SBC Communications. As described below, this is an arbitration of the limited number of issues that could not be fully resolved in the several months' long collaborative process under Condition 29. On November 9, 2000, the Hearing Examiner issued a Proposed Order ("HEPO") on the 19 arbitrated issues. The HEPO contains well over 100 pages of analysis summarizing the parties' positions, the evidence presented, the applicable legal standards, and the proposed findings and conclusions on these issues. The HEPO requests that the parties provide additional information on certain aspects of Issues 10, 47, 56, and 62; Ameritech Illinois responds to those requests below. As is also detailed below, Ameritech Illinois takes exception to certain proposed findings and conclusions on five issues: Issue 2 (joint testing), Issue 11 (retain current listings), Issue 13 (address validation), Issues 29 and 31 (loop qualification information), and Issue 46 (loop hot cuts process). Some background may help set the stage for these exceptions.

I. OVERVIEW

A. Operations Support Systems

Operations Support Systems ("OSS") are the electronic systems, information, and personnel that Ameritech Illinois uses to serve its customers. HEPO at 6.[1/]

OSS serve five principal functions (*id.* at 7):

[1/] Citations to HEPO pages are to our printout of the electronic HEPO that was distributed to the parties by e-mail. It is possible that printing that document on different types of printers may result in slightly different pagination.

- *Pre-ordering:* the process by which CLEC and Ameritech Illinois retail customer representatives alike obtain information to place an order;
- *Ordering:* the sequence of steps involved in placing a customer's order on Ameritech Illinois' systems;
- *Provisioning:* the activities involved in filling the order;
- *Repair and Maintenance:* receiving "trouble reports" (reports of service problems, which might indicate a problem with services or equipment) and identifying and performing any necessary work to resolve those reports; and
- *Billing* the end user as necessary for the above services.

Ameritech Illinois provides CLECs access to its OSS through electronic "interfaces" or "gateways," which connect a CLEC's personnel or electronic systems to the Ameritech Illinois electronic systems that help perform the OSS functions. HEPO at 6. These latter systems are sometimes described as "downstream"or "back-end" systems (because they receive information after it passes through an interface) or as "legacy" systems. *Id.*

B. Condition 29 of the Commission's Illinois Merger Order

By order dated September 23, 1999 in Docket 98-0555 ("*Illinois Merger Order*"), as modified by Orders entered November 15, 1999 and November 23, 1999, the Commission approved the merger of Ameritech and SBC Communications. Condition 29 of that Order was the Joint Applicants' commitment to improve the electronic interfaces used to support the OSS functions of pre-ordering, ordering, provisioning, maintenance and repair, and billing for wholesale services. The Commission established a three-phase process as "a reasonable approach to what will certainly be a complex and expensive process." *Illinois Merger Order* at 196.

Consistent with the schedule established in that order, Ameritech Illinois filed a Plan of Record and, on March 1, 2000, a Revised Plan of Record, including its assessment of existing OSS interfaces, business processes and rules, hardware capabilities, data network, and security protections. The Commission approved the Revised Plan of Record by order dated April 5, 2000 (Phase 1 of the Merger Order schedule).

Following approval of the Plan of Record, the Commission initiated a collaborative workshop between Ameritech Illinois, Staff, and the other parties ("Phase 2"). The purpose of the collaborative was to address Phase 2 issues related to OSS interfaces, enhancements, and business requirements. Many of the issues in Phase 2 have been resolved by agreement. The remainder were submitted for arbitration.

In Phase 3, Ameritech Illinois is to "develop and deploy, on a phased-in basis, systems interfaces, enhancements, and business requirements consistent with the outcome of Phase 2." *Illinois Merger Order*, at 196. The Commission held that "Phase 3 shall be completed 12 months after Phase 2." *Id.*

C. Ameritech Illinois' Plan for Implementing OSS Enhancements

Ameritech Illinois has already implemented enhancements to its pre-ordering and ordering systems to facilitate access by requesting carriers to facilities used in providing advanced services, such as Digital Subscriber Line ("DSL") services. HEPO at 11. Further, Ameritech Illinois has modified the repair and maintenance interface (which can be accessed either by an application-to-application method or by a Graphical User Interface) so that requesting carriers can test loops on-line, while the customer reporting trouble with his or her service is still on the phone. *Id.* In the coming year, consistent with (and in many cases well in advance of) the 12-month implementation

schedule established by the Commission, Ameritech Illinois will carry out a series of major enhancements "on a phased-in basis" (again, consistent with the Commission's Order). *Id.* These improvements are summarized below, with references to arbitration issues where they are discussed in detail. Updated Figure 1 presents a timeline for these improvements.

As Updated Figure 1 shows, in March 2001 Ameritech Illinois will update the existing pre-order and order interfaces to version 4 of the industry standard Local Service Ordering Guide. *Id.* At the same time, Ameritech Illinois will implement "versioning" (Issue 1) which will modify Ameritech Illinois' OSS interfaces so that, when the March 2001 changes (and any future changes after that) are made and a new "version" of software is implemented, the OSS interfaces can still understand and process a CLEC request submitted in the two previous versions. *Id.* Next, Ameritech Illinois will complement the existing interfaces by adding two new, alternative interfaces for pre-ordering, and a new Graphical User Interface for ordering (Issue 19). Also, Ameritech Illinois will implement a procedure for supplemental orders (Issue 42) known as "full refresh," which means that a CLEC supplement to an existing order, and any Ameritech Illinois notice of a change to that order, will be cumulative (showing all the information on that order, in addition to showing the information that has changed).[2/] Joint testing of these enhancements, to help ensure that they will work as planned, will begin in January 2001 using a new "test environment" modeled on the one used by Southwestern Bell in Texas, which the FCC endorsed when it approved Southwestern Bell Telephone Company's ("SWBT's") application to provide long-distance service (Issue 2).

By June 2001, Ameritech Illinois will also implement a "single interface" which will allow

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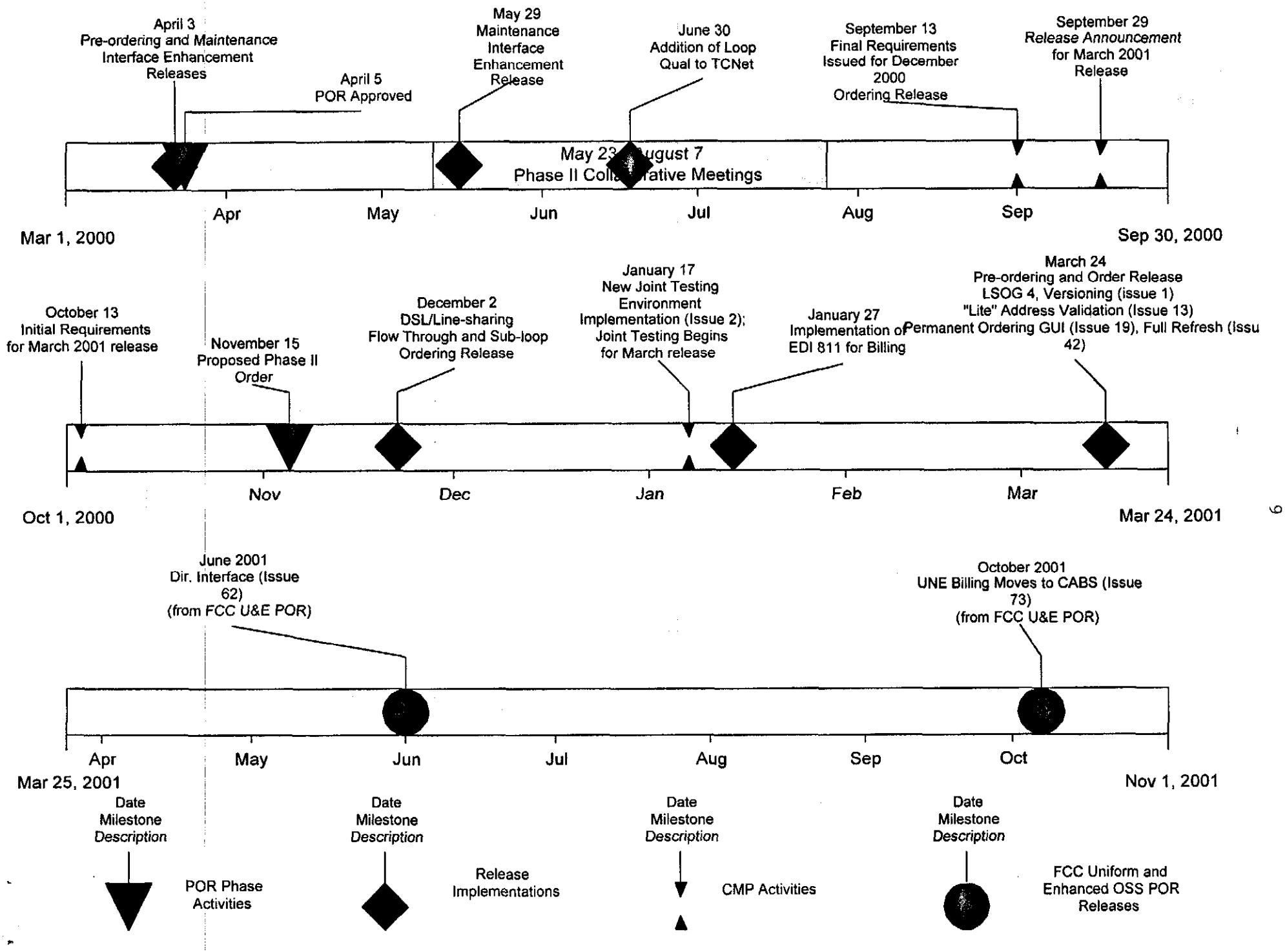
[2/] At the time of the HEPO (at 85) Ameritech Illinois planned to implement "full refresh" by September 2001. Ameritech Illinois has since determined that it can implement this improvement in March, and it plans to do so. This change is reflected in Updated Figure 1.

CLECs to combine service orders (to be processed by Ameritech Illinois) with requests for directory listings (to be processed by Ameritech Advertising Services, an unregulated affiliate) in a single transaction (Issue 62).[3/] And in October 2001, Ameritech Illinois will move from "AEBS," the current billing format for unbundled network elements, to "CABS" (Carrier Access Billing System) (Issue 73(a)).

Ameritech Illinois' undertakings — and the commitment of time, money, and personnel required to implement them in the organized and thorough manner that is required to modify complex electronic systems properly — comply with the terms of Condition 29. And as we show below, they are sufficient to address the concerns of CLECs raised in this arbitration, and in collaborative proceedings throughout the region and at the federal level.

[3/] Ameritech Illinois initially proposed an implementation date of September 2001. The HEPO calls for implementation by July 2001, and Ameritech Illinois does not except to that conclusion. In fact, Ameritech Illinois and the CLECs have reached an agreement that will result in implementation in June 2001.

Updated Figure 1



II. EXCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES TO HEPO'S REQUESTS

ISSUE 2: Joint Testing

BACKGROUND

"Joint testing" describes the process by which Ameritech Illinois and CLECs will test planned OSS changes before they go into "production" (that is, before they are used in processing real-world transactions). *See* Tr. 662. Testing is part of the overall process for change management, and it allows Ameritech Illinois and CLECs to verify that the OSS interfaces will still work, and that CLECs can still work with them, after the change. *See id.*

Ameritech Illinois proposes to implement a new "test environment" — a set of programs that is designed to process transactions, such as orders for telecommunications services, the same way the real-world OSS programs will process them when the proposed change is implemented — in mid-January 2001. HEPO at 25 (citing Tr. 662). This will give Ameritech Illinois, and all CLECs, two months to test the March 2001 changes before they go into effect. *Id.* The proposed environment will also be available for testing between releases, for CLECs that are just starting out on an interface or any other purpose (*e.g.*, in case a CLEC makes changes on its own side of the interface and wants to see how its revised systems work with Ameritech Illinois' OSS).

The proposed test environment will be modeled on the environment used by SWBT in Texas, which the FCC found adequate when it approved SWBT's application to enter the long-distance market in Texas. *Id.* It will be kept separate from the "production environment" (the real-world OSS interfaces), which will continue to process transactions in the existing format until the

proposed change is implemented. *Id.* That way, CLECs will still use existing formats to submit orders from actual customers in the production environment, while simultaneously using the proposed new formats to submit test transactions or "scenarios" (orders designed by the CLECs to mimic orders that customers are expected to generate) in the test environment. Ameritech Illinois will work with CLECs to coordinate and carry out their various individual test plans, and to resolve problems noted in testing. *Id.* This cooperation and feedback helps both Ameritech Illinois and CLECs. *Id.*

DISCUSSION

The disputes in this arbitration concern specific features of Ameritech Illinois' proposed new test environment, and proposed changes to Ameritech Illinois current testing procedures (which are to remain in effect until January 2000, when the new test environment is available). The Hearing Examiner correctly rejected the CLECs' proposed changes to Ameritech Illinois' current test environment. As she reasoned, "[a]ny changes to the current testing environment would be obsolete in less than two months"; thus, there is "no need to take resources away from other AI projects in order to make changes to a temporary system." *Id.* Likewise, as to the proposed new test environment, Ameritech Illinois agrees with virtually all of the Hearing Examiner's other proposed findings and conclusions.

Ameritech Illinois' sole exception is to the HEPO's proposed requirement that the new test environment "can not use the same computer hardware as the production system." HEPO at 30. While Ameritech Illinois agrees that the concern the HEPO sought to address — the need to keep the testing and production environments separate — is a valid one, that concern can be addressed without having to purchase and install a redundant set of computers. Separate computer systems

would be costly to buy, and more importantly, would take time to obtain, install, test, and make ready for use — enough time to delay implementation of the March 2001 changes. This is especially true of the large mainframe computer on which testing is run. Using separate hardware would also be impractical: for example, pre-ordering involves access to massive databases containing customer and address information; it would be impractical to create redundant versions of those databases, rather than letting the test programs use the actual databases.

Most importantly, truly separate computer systems would be unnecessary. Ameritech Illinois had understood going in to the arbitration that AT&T (the lead CLEC on this issue) had agreed in principle that the test environment *can* use the same computer hardware as the production environment, so long as it used physically separate software code, which is separated from the production software by a virtual "partition" in the mainframe computer. Further, no party had expressed any concern in its comments about the use of common computer hardware for the testing environment. The HEPO's proposed finding rests on a misunderstanding of the testimony of Ameritech Illinois' witness, Ms. Cullen, who agreed that Ameritech Illinois was "committed to provide CLECs access to a physically separate computer-based testing system that is separate from production." Tr. 663. Ms. Cullen, however, was merely reiterating Ameritech Illinois' outstanding commitment to using physically separate *software* and a "partitioned" test environment, not making a new commitment to procure, install, and utilize physically separate *hardware*.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT LANGUAGE

Accordingly, Ameritech Illinois recommends that the last four sentences of the first paragraph of the "Analysis and Conclusion" on this sub-issue (page 28 of the HEPO), beginning "Ms. Cullen's statement" and ending with "the ordering and pre-ordering test system," be deleted

and replaced with the following:

> The use of separate hardware is unnecessary so long as the test environment uses physically separate software code, which is separated from the production software by a virtual "partition" in the mainframe computer. The Commission finds this language is sufficient to address the CLEC concern about separate testing and production environments. Accordingly, no change to the POR is necessary.

ISSUE 10: Written Agreement Documentation

This issue concerned AT&T's requests for changes to specific language appearing in Ameritech Illinois' Plan of Record. Ameritech Illinois does not except to any of the Hearing Examiner's proposed findings and conclusions on this issue. However, the HEPO asks the parties to comment on clarifying language proposed by Ameritech Illinois in response to an AT&T request for references to Local Service Ordering Guides 4 (to be implemented in March 2001) and 5. HEPO at 53. That language reads as follows:

> The Ameritech March 2001 ordering and pre-ordering releases will be based on OBF LSOG 4. Where guidance exists in LSOG 5 but not in LSOG 4 for functionality to be implemented in March 2001, Ameritech will look to LSOG 5 when creating specifications for that functionality. While there is no Ameritech ordering release currently scheduled for June 2001, should Ameritech schedule such a release, it would be based on LSOG 4. As part of the SBC Uniform and Enhanced OSS POR, SBC/Ameritech has agreed that the Phase II ordering release in Ameritech will include some LSOG 5 functionality.

The proposed language is, of course, acceptable to Ameritech Illinois. In its reply brief, Ameritech Illinois will respond to AT&T's comments.

ISSUE 11: Retain Current Listings

BACKGROUND

Many businesses have multiple telephone numbers for a single location. To follow an example presented at the hearing (Tr. 1025-28), a Sears store might have a main telephone number, along with separate numbers for the "Appliances," "Automotive," "Housewares," "Lawn and Garden" and other departments. Ameritech Illinois structures its records for such end users by using a "master bill number." For example:

Master Bill Number	312-555-1111
Main Number	312-555-1111
Appliances	312-555-1112
Automotive	312-555-1113
Housewares	312-555-1114
Lawn and Garden	312-555-1115

The directory listings for such an account may or may not correspond to this account structure. HEPO at 55. For example, there might not be a separate listing for the children's clothing department; outside callers would reach that department by calling the master number, or another listed number, and being transferred.

A "partial migration" occurs when a customer moves some, but not all, of its lines to a new carrier. *Id.* In this example, the customer might decide to let a CLEC provide service to the appliance and automotive departments, but not to the main line for the store. *Id.* By contrast, in a full migration, the customer switches its entire account, and all the lines in it, to the new carrier. *Id.* Ameritech Illinois proposed to implement a process that would allow CLECs the option to retain current directory listings "as is" on all full migration orders, by March 2001. *Id.*

The issue in this arbitration was how directory listings should be handled in a partial

migration. The CLECs contended that they should be able to tell Ameritech Illinois to "retain current directory listings" — that is, to keep the directory listings exactly as is. *Id.* at 56. Ameritech Illinois, however, pointed out that such requests would be difficult to interpret and apply correctly due to the complexities of the account, and the fact that the account structure might differ from the directory listing. *Id.*

As Ameritech Illinois showed, there is a fundamental difference between processing a partial migration as opposed to a full migration. In a full migration, the master bill number and all the telephone numbers associated with it in the account go to the new carrier. *Id.* A request to "retain current listings" would be clear and can be processed accurately: All of the listings for that customer would carry forward to the new CLEC, in the same format, and the bills for those listings would continue to go to the location corresponding to the master bill number. In a partial migration, however, the relationship between the master bill number and the subsidiary numbers will, by definition, change. *Id.* at 57. At least one of the subsidiary numbers will belong to a new CLEC, and a new account structure must be created. *Id.*

Further, although a request to "retain current listings" may seem simple to the CLEC and end user, they might not understand the nuances of the account, which was created by and belongs to a different carrier. For example, the line that is going to the CLEC (the children's clothing department in the example) might not have a current listing. The end user may want a separate listing for that department after moving that number to the CLEC. The end user might request that its listings stay "as is," (to avoid being charged for new listings) without understanding that the "children's clothing" number does not have a listing. A request to "retain current listings" in that situation can be interpreted in one of two ways: (1) that the children's clothing department should

remain unlisted, while the listings for the other departments should be retained as is; or (2) the children's clothing department should be treated as a separate master bill number (because it belongs to another CLEC's account) and should be listed in the same way the existing master bill number is. Moreover, if the current listing has an alternative number ("if no answer, call 555-2111") there is no way to know which account that listing should go with. Thus, Ameritech Illinois' current procedure is to contact the CLEC and determine the end user's preferences for the new account structure.

DISCUSSION

Ameritech Illinois does not object to the substance of the HEPO's proposed findings and conclusions, only to the procedure by which they would be implemented. The Hearing Examiner correctly appreciated that the CLEC proposal would require Ameritech Illinois to make assumptions about how the end user wants to organize the account structure and directory listings, which might differ from the end user's true preferences. For this reason, the Hearing Examiner recognized that "a 'retain current listings' request for a partial migration does seem fraught with possibilities for chaos and confusion." *Id.* Indeed, the HEPO acknowledged that the CLECs' proposed time-saving measure might "prove more time-consuming in the end for both CLECs and AI." *Id.* Nevertheless, the HEPO directs Ameritech Illinois to implement a process to allow CLECs to retain current listings on partial migrations by March 2001 "[t]o the extent that CLECs . . . are willing to assume the risk that AI's action is appropriate for any given situation." *Id.*

Ameritech Illinois is willing to comply with the HEPO — that is, to develop a set of assumptions about what a CLEC means when it asks to "retain current listings" in a partial migration, to the extent that CLECs are willing to assume the risk that those assumptions accurately

reflect what the CLEC wants. There is a procedure, however, that would allow Ameritech Illinois to minimize the risk assumed by CLECs, and to minimize the potential waste of time and resources by all parties. Currently, the HEPO appears to contemplate a process by which (1) Ameritech Illinois would unilaterally develop the necessary assumptions and change its systems and programs to implement those assumptions; then, (2) any CLEC that wishes to have its order processed in accordance with those assumptions (in the HEPO's words, "to assume the risk that AI's action is appropriate") would submit requests to "retain current listings." This procedure creates the risk that Ameritech Illinois will expend time and resources (during the critical window between now and March 2001, in which many important systems changes are to be implemented) to develop, implement, and test a set of assumptions for "retain current listings" requests, only to find that CLECs do not want the product that emerges.

The procedure for implementing the HEPO's recommendations should allow for CLECs and Ameritech Illinois to have joint input in creating and carrying out the set of assumptions for processing "retain current listings" requests, and it should allow the necessary time afterward for internal quality control testing by Ameritech Illinois and joint testing with CLECs. That would help minimize the risk that CLECs would have to assume under the HEPO (namely, the risk that Ameritech Illinois' procedure for retaining current listings is inappropriate for the situation in which the CLEC requests such retention), and it would also minimize the potential waste of resources by Ameritech Illinois.

The Change Management Process already provides a mechanism for meeting all of these goals. It allows for Ameritech Illinois to meet with CLECs to discuss and then issue "initial requirements" on a system change, followed by walk-throughs that allow for more CLEC comments,

followed by internal testing and joint testing with further opportunities for CLEC comments. Accordingly, Ameritech Illinois proposes that it be allowed to issue "initial requirements" (*i.e.* the set of assumptions Ameritech Illinois will make in processing requests to retain current listings in a partial migration) in April 2001, and that those requirements be modified and implemented through the Change Management Process from that point.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT LANGUAGE

Accordingly, Ameritech Illinois requests that the Commission delete the final sentence of the last paragraph in the "Conclusion" under Issue 11 (at page 57 of the HEPO) and replace it with the following:

> To the extent that CLECs like CoreComm are willing to assume the risk that AI's action is appropriate for any given situation, we will require AI to issue "initial requirements" for a process that allows CLECs to retain current listings on partial migrations by April 2001. The implementation of such requirements shall take place in accordance with the Change Management Process.

ISSUE 13: Customer Service Record Address Validation

BACKGROUND

As AT&T's own witness Mr. Connolly acknowledged, it is in the CLECs' interest that Ameritech Illinois install the services they request at the correct location, and that Ameritech Illinois notify a CLEC if it requests service at an incorrect address. Tr. 787. Likewise, Covad acknowledged that "address validation is one of the most important functions in determining if service to the end user can be provided." Covad Initial Comments at 3. Thus, industry standards require every request for service to include the address at which that service is to be performed. HEPO at 57; Tr. 784-785. Ameritech Illinois checks those orders against its own address databases (the Street Address Guide or "SAG," for street address information, and the "living unit" database for information on apartment numbers) before accepting them for processing. HEPO at 58. If the order does not match the address in Ameritech Illinois' records, Ameritech Illinois returns it to the CLEC for correction, along with a notice that says why the order was rejected. *Id.*

To assist CLECs in correctly identifying the customer location, Ameritech Illinois offers an on-line "address validation" function via its pre-order interface. *Id.* As Ameritech Illinois' witness Mr. Gilles explained, a CLEC can use this function to check the address on its order against the same Street Address Guide and "living unit" databases that Ameritech Illinois' own retail personnel access when placing an order. *Id.* The address validation function returns an answer within seconds, along with suggested corrections if the address submitted by the CLEC does not match the database. *Id.*; Tr. 785-86.

The CLECs in this arbitration alleged that some orders are rejected for inappropriate reasons: either because of minor discrepancies in format (the hypothetical advanced by counsel for Covad

involved an order in which the CLEC abbreviated "avenue" as "av." instead of "ave.") or because the address information in the customer service record (another database that CLECs can access in pre-ordering) does not match the address databases. In response, Ameritech Illinois has proposed to implement Lite address validation, which allows a CLEC to submit an order *without* an address, using instead the customer's telephone number to identify the location at which Ameritech Illinois is to install service, and thus bypass the address edit that is currently performed for all orders. HEPO at 59. The customer's address would become optional information. *Id.*

The CLECs agreed with Ameritech Illinois' proposal, but sought to accelerate its timing (*i.e.*, the CLECs wanted Lite validation before March 2001) and increase its scope (specifically, Covad wanted Ameritech Illinois to perform Lite validation on orders for certain new DSL loops). The HEPO correctly rejected the Covad proposal, because it "could very well harm competition and reduce the quality of service to the end user, by creating confusion between AI, Covad, and the end user about where such service would be installed." HEPO at 61. As to timing, the HEPO directs Ameritech Illinois to implement Lite validation by February 2001, one month in advance of the date proposed by Ameritech Illinois.

DISCUSSION

Ameritech Illinois respectfully excepts to the HEPO's recommendation that Ameritech Illinois implement Lite validation by February 2001, rather than March. The HEPO correctly recognized that Ameritech Illinois has committed to implement several OSS changes that are significant in number, competitive benefit, and the amount of work involved, in March 2001. On virtually every other issue related to timing of OSS improvements, the HEPO correctly rejected CLEC attempts to accelerate implementation of these and other OSS changes, on the grounds that

such acceleration could jeopardize the timeliness and quality of the March 2001 releases. And with respect to address validation, the HEPO acknowledged Ameritech Illinois' "other commitments" and even went so far as to say that it is "not unsympathetic to AI's position." HEPO at 61. Nevertheless, the HEPO concludes that "Lite" validation should be accelerated by one month.

Acceleration by a month may not seem significant — and in fact, the benefits of early implementation would not be significant. The period of time in dispute is only one month, and there are adequate measures in place to help CLECs with the current process of address validation. Most importantly, Ameritech Illinois has made address validation available on-line through the pre-order interface. With this function, the CLEC can test an address *before* submitting an order — thus avoiding the risk the order will be rejected — and receive an answer, with suggested corrections if needed, in seconds. Tr. 785-86.

On the other hand, however, the costs of acceleration — even by one month — *would* be quite significant. Indeed, given that Ameritech Illinois has already had to begin its own "quality control" testing of programs just to meet the proposed *March* release dates, it would be infeasible to implement Lite validation by February while still providing the necessary time for internal testing, and joint testing with CLECs. Further, by incorrectly calling for Lite validation in February, while correctly holding the March release date for other OSS changes, the HEPO would require Ameritech Illinois to implement OSS changes at two different times in the first quarter of 2001. Implementation of OSS releases takes extra time and effort for all parties; for this reason, the Change Management Process specifies that, as a general matter, Ameritech Illinois should only implement one OSS release per quarter — a limitation that the CLECs requested. In particular, implementing a significant OSS release like Lite validation in February would unduly disrupt — and

potentially jeopardize — the releases planned for March, which will be in the joint testing phase in February. The releases planned for March are too important to risk any sacrifice in quality or timeliness of implementation. Implementing Lite validation in March, rather than the HEPO's recommended February date, is the best way to ensure the timely and proper implementation of *all* the changes planned for March 2001.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT LANGUAGE

The second full paragraph in the HEPO's "Conclusion" on this issue (page 61, beginning "We are not unsympathetic . . .") should be deleted, and the following sentence should be added to the end of the first full paragraph of that section: "We therefore direct AI to implement relaxed address validation, pursuant to its commitment, in March 2001."

ISSUES 29 and 31: DSL Loop Qualification

BACKGROUND

Issues 29 and 31 concerned three sub-issues raised by Covad: loop makeup information, loop reservation and terminal makeup information. The HEPO reached the correct conclusion on loop reservation (noting that "[t]he possibilities for anti-competitive behavior on the part of individual CLECs from this process are far too abundant") and terminal makeup information (noting that "[t]he proposal is vague and as Staff suggests, is simply not necessary). HEPO at 79. Thus, Ameritech Illinois' exception is limited to loop makeup information dispute.

Two steps are involved when a CLEC selects an unbundled loop. The first step is pre-qualification, where the CLEC attempts to determine whether a loop capable of providing the type of service the CLEC seeks to provide (*e.g.*, ADSL), serves a particular address. Once the customer actually orders service from the CLEC, the CLEC submits a formal loop order to Ameritech Illinois. Under the current pre-qualification process, a CLEC will submit a request and Ameritech Illinois will return detailed information (consisting of more than 40 different elements) about a single loop that serves the particular address. When a loop is actually ordered, Ameritech Illinois' systems select and assign the optimal available loop that meets the requirements of the particular order. Tr. 822, 825, 829. The system selects the optimum loop by applying a series of 15 algorithms to the information provided on the CLEC's loop order to accurately select a loop with the appropriate transmission characteristics to meet the service request. *See* Tr. 825-26, 834-35; Am. Ill. Init. Comments at 81-82. The optimal loop assigned by the system may or may not be the same loop on which information was provided in the pre-qualification process. Covad requested that Ameritech Illinois be required to provide detailed makeup information on not just a single loop, but on up to

10 different loops that theoretically could be used to serve the specified address. Covad Initial Comments at 9.

DISCUSSION

The HEPO (at 78) orders Ameritech Illinois to provide CLECs with loop makeup information for up to 10 different loops serving a single address. The HEPO directs Ameritech Illinois to begin providing such information with the March 2001 release of various OSS improvements. Ameritech Illinois excepts to that finding.

Ameritech Illinois first excepts on the merits. For the reasons explained in Ameritech Illinois' Post-Hearing Comments (at 83-86), there is no need for CLECs to receive information on multiple loops serving a specific address, nor are Ameritech Illinois' systems designed to provide such information. Ameritech Illinois' current procedure is to select the optimal loop to fill the CLEC's request, and requiring information on multiple loops (which necessarily will include several less-than-optimal loops) is wasteful for both parties. CLECs already receive the exact same loop information, derived from the exact same systems, as Ameritech Illinois' retail operations and affiliates, and there is no need for CLECs to receive superior quality or more detailed information.[4/]

[4/] Ameritech Illinois also excepts to the HEPO's statement that "AI's optimization process in the ordering stage is anti-competitive." HEPO at 78. That statement is based on concerns about the CLECs identifying what service they plan to provide when they seek loop makeup information. *Id.* The record, however, provides no basis for assuming that this is anticompetitive. *First*, and significantly, the CLECs never raised any concern about this in their initial comments. *See* Covad Initial Comments at 6-9. *Second*, the CLECs have direct input on what information goes into a loop makeup request and have already used that power to reduce the amount of information they will provide. *Third*, there is absolutely no evidence that Ameritech Illinois has used, or even could use, the information on a loop makeup request in an anti-competitive manner. *Fourth*, in any event, the statement is unnecessary to the HEPO's conclusion on the issue being arbitrated. Accordingly, the sentence quoted at the start of this footnote should be deleted from the HEPO.

If the Commission elects to require Ameritech Illinois to provide such multiple-loop information, however, March 2001 is not a realistic or reasonable deadline for Ameritech Illinois to develop any sort of mechanism to provide the type of information the CLECs seem to want. To begin with, the actual type and format of the information that the CLECs desire, or that Ameritech Illinois can provide, remains unclear and undetermined. As the record shows, different ILECs have taken different approaches to this issue, providing CLECs with differing amounts of information in different formats and timeframes. *See* HEPO at 76-77; Am. Ill. Post-Hearing Comments at 84-85 and Am. Ill. Ex. 18; Covad Initial Comments at 9. It will take time and consultation with the CLECs to determine what type of information Ameritech Illinois can and should provide, and in what format and timeframe. For example, the level of detail that the CLECs desire may well affect the speed with which data can be provided and the speed with which Ameritech Illinois can move from providing information manually to providing it in electronic form.

In addition, as the HEPO correctly recognized with respect to other timing issues, it will be important for Ameritech Illinois and CLECs to develop a smooth, useful process, rather than rushing to begin providing information in any form available before the process is really ready. Rolling out an incomplete process simply to meet the March 2001 deadline would negatively affect loop provisioning performance and other factors, which ultimately could harm CLECs more than it helps them. At this point, however, the schedule of activities and upgrades to Ameritech Illinois' OSS between now and March is already filled to overflowing. *See* Updated Figure 1, *supra*; Figure 1 in Ameritech Illinois' Post-Hearing Comments; and Issues 1, 13, and 19, all of which relate to OSS improvements set for implementation in March 2001. Ameritech Illinois has already devoted substantial resources to the March 2001 release, and the testing and other activities leading up to that

release are in full swing. Adding a significant new task to be initiated, tested (first internally and then with CLECs), and completed by March 2001 simply is not feasible at this late date.[5/] As with other OSS improvements, developing a process to provide makeup information on multiple loops is not something that can be achieved simply by redirecting more resources at the project; it is a task that would require an entirely new use of Ameritech Illinois' systems, which were not designed for the task, and will require careful planning by Ameritech Illinois and coordination with CLECs.

Accordingly, if the Commission elects to require Ameritech Illinois to provide makeup information on multiple loops, it should adopt a reasonable timeframe for doing so. Ameritech Illinois would suggest the following timetable: Ameritech Illinois would agree to meet with CLECs to discuss the details of the multi-loop information they seek, and then to publish proposed "initial requirements" for that process in April 2001. At that point, the new procedure would be taken up through the Change Management Process, with the ultimate schedule for deployment being established through that process.

[5/] The HEPO "believe[s] that this information already exists in a mechanized form as AI is able to return information from the optimization process in a manner of seconds." HEPO at 78. The optimization process, however, returns makeup information on a single, optimal loop, disregarding other loops. By contrast, a multi-loop makeup process will be a qualitatively entirely different task, requiring Ameritech Illinois to catalogue and return data, for CLECs only, on a number of sub-optimal loops.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT LANGUAGE

The first four paragraphs of the "Analysis and Conclusion" on this issue (page 78 of the HEPO) should be deleted and replaced with the following:

> We agree with AI that it should not be required to provide CLECs with detailed makeup information on multiple loops serving a single address. AI's systems are not currently configured to provide such information. Rather, those systems currently provide CLECs with makeup information on an optimal loop that fits the CLEC's proposed service request. This should be sufficient for CLECs to determine whether they wish to place on order for a loop to the particular address. Providing information on other loops, while clearly burdensome to AI, would likely do little to aid CLECs, and the CLECs' only rationale for seeking information on more loops is that they want to shop around beyond the optimal loop for which AI already provides information. Moreover, the loop optimization process is the exact same process AI uses to identify loops for its own retail customers. While the FCC has stated that "the relevant inquiry is not whether the retail arm of the incumbent has access to the underlying loop qualification information, but rather whether such information exists anywhere within the incumbent's back office and can be accessed by any of the incumbent LEC's personnel" (UNE Remand Order, Para. 430), the FCC also stated that incumbent LECs are not required to compile an inventory of network facilities when they do not maintain such an inventory for themselves, (id., Para. 429), and the courts have held that incumbent LECs cannot be required to provide CLECs with access to UNEs (and OSS is a UNE) that is superior in quality to what the incumbents provide to themselves. AI does not maintain an inventory of makeup information on multiple loops for every address for its own purposed, and we see no reason to force it to effectively create such an inventory for CLECs with each loop makeup request. Accordingly, we find for AI on the issue of providing loop makeup information on multiple loops per address.

Alternatively, if the Commission elects to require AI to provide makeup information on multiple loops for an address, it should change the timeframe for doing so to recognize the infeasibility of creating such a capability as part of the already-crowded March 2001 release. The fourth full paragraph of the "Analysis and Conclusion" section on Issues 29 and 31 should therefore be modified as follows:

CLECs request that AI implement this functionality by December 31, 2000. AI contends that this request would be "burdensome" and "unreasonable" and would require AI to "substantially reconfigure" its systems. In light of this, and in light of the fact that AI's March 2001 OSS release is already well underway and may not be able to accommodate any additional new processes, and in light of the fact that precisely what makeup information the CLECs would like on these multiple loops remains unclear, we direct AI to meet with CLECs to determine the specifics of the new process for loop makeup information, to issue initial requirements" for that new process in April 2001, and that any implementation of those new requirements shall take place through the usual Change Management Process.

ISSUE 46: Hot Cuts Process

BACKGROUND

When an existing Ameritech Illinois customer switches service to a CLEC, Ameritech Illinois and the CLEC undertake a procedure that physically disconnects the loop from Ameritech Illinois' switch and reconnects the loop to the CLEC's facilities. This procedure is known as a "hot cut." Ameritech Illinois and the CLEC must coordinate the timing of the hot cut because the process requires almost simultaneous action on the part of Ameritech Illinois and the CLEC to ensure that the customer's loss of service is minimal.

Prior to performing the hot cut, Ameritech Illinois will conduct a Dial Tone/Automatic Number Identification test ("DT/ANI test") to ensure that the loop has a dial tone and is set up to serve the correct telephone number. While it has been Ameritech Illinois' practice to perform a DT/ANI test on the actual day of the hot cut (the "due date" or "DD"), Ameritech Illinois will perform a DT/ANI test prior to the date of the hot cut at the CLEC's request. AT&T contends, and the HEPO found, that Ameritech Illinois should perform a DT/ANI test as a matter of course two days before the actual hot cut ("DD-2"). The HEPO also established time frames related to Ameritech Illinois informing a CLEC that a DT/ANI test has revealed a problem with the loop.

DISCUSSION

The HEPO (at 88) directs Ameritech Illinois to perform DT/ANI testing for loop hot cuts two days prior to the scheduled cutover date ("DD-2") as a standard practice, unless the CLEC informs Ameritech Illinois that it cannot meet that deadline. The HEPO also states (at 88) that when a DT/ANI test reveals a problem, Ameritech Illinois should notify the CLEC within one hour of the

test and give the CLEC thirty minutes to decide whether to go ahead with the cutover on the scheduled date or to reschedule.

Ameritech Illinois excepts to the requirement that it perform DT/ANI tests on DD-2 as a standard practice, for the reasons stated in its Post-Hearing Comments (at 99-103). Ameritech Illinois also excepts to the timeframe requirement for notifying CLECs when a DT/ANI test reveals a problem, and requests that the HEPO be clarified on this point. In particular, the HEPO should account for the fact that the proper timeframe for notifying CLECs of the results of a DT/ANI test and deciding whether to reschedule the due date for the hot cut varies depending on when the DT/ANI test is being performed.

Ameritech Illinois provides CLECs with notice of any problems with ample time to fix those problems before the cutover when it performs the DT/ANI test prior to the due date. Specifically, if a DT/ANI test is conducted and reveals problems on DD-2 (assuming tests on DD-2 are required as a standard practice), Ameritech Illinois will notify the CLEC of the adverse result either around noon on DD-2 (for tests performed that morning), at the close of business on DD-2 (for tests performed in late morning or early afternoon), or by 10:00 a.m. on DD-1 (for tests performed in the late afternoon or evening of DD-2).[6/] Thus, the absolute latest a CLEC would receive notice of a failed DT/ANI test (assuming the CLEC does not request a special test time) is 10:00 a.m. on DD-1. Notice during business hours on DD-2 or by 10:00 a.m. on DD-1 gives the CLEC ample time to decide how to address any problem detected by the DT/ANI test. Indeed, even when a DT/ANI test reveals a problem, Ameritech Illinois assumes that the cutover is still on for the scheduled time until

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[6/] Until recently notice was provided by noon on DD-1, but Ameritech has agreed in the Wisconsin collaborative to provide notice by 10:00 a.m. on DD-1.

it hears otherwise from the CLEC. This should satisfy AT&T's alleged concerns about having adequate time to fix a problem or reschedule before a cutover.

Given that the CLEC will in most or all cases have at least a full business day to decide whether to reset the due date, there is no need to require 1-hour notice of a DT/ANI test failure on DD-2 or require the CLEC to respond within 30 minutes on DD-2. Moreover, if DT/ANI tests are to be performed DD-2 as a standard practice, the Ameritech Illinois technician will be given a workload requiring him to perform several tests (and other activities) in a row, and it would be highly inefficient and disruptive if the technician had to interrupt the flow of work to individually report every DT/ANI test that reveals a problem. The Commission should not impose requirements that reduce provisioning efficiency.

By contrast, if a DT/ANI test is performed on the due date itself (as a CLEC could request) and fails, Ameritech Illinois would agree to notify the CLEC within an hour and give the CLEC a 30-minute window to either fix the problem or reschedule the due date. This is a significant compromise by Ameritech Illinois, which previously had automatically cancelled a loop cutover when the DT/ANI test failed on the due date. The HEPO should make clear the distinction between the timing of the DT/ANI tests and the timing of notice to the CLEC.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT LANGUAGE

The fifth full paragraph of the "Analysis and Conclusion" section on this issue (page 88 of the HEPO, beginning "In an attempt . . .") should be deleted and replaced with the following:

> We find that AI's current proposal satisfies the concerns of all parties. AI will perform DT/ANI testing on DD-2 where requested by the CLEC, or at such other time as is requested by the CLEC. This allows those CLECs who can complete their provisioning work on time to have the DT/ANI test on DD-2, but does not require AI to perform such testing as a standard practice and thus have to keep track of all the CLECs who cannot meet that deadline, yet still want DT/ANI testing performed at some point.
>
> We also find reasonable AI's proposal that (1) if a DT/ANI test performed on DD-2 reveals a problem, it will notify the CLEC of the problem either by the close of business on DD-2 (for tests performed before noon on DD-2) or by 10:00 a.m. on DD-1 (for tests performed after noon on DD-2) and allow the CLEC to decide whether to stick with the original due date for that loop or reschedule the due date at any time before the due date arrives; and (2) for DT/ANI tests performed on the due date itself, Ameritech Illinois will report any failed tests to the CLEC within one hour of the test and give the CLEC 30 minutes to decide whether to proceed with the loop cutover or reschedule it.

ISSUE 47: Hot Cuts: Frame Due Time

Because AT&T, the original sponsor of this issue, no longer takes a position, the HEPO (at 89) directed Ameritech Illinois and McLeod (which joined the issue only at the hearing stage) to meet and discuss whether any open dispute remains. Ameritech Illinois spoke with McLeod on November 28, 2000. Based on that conversation, Ameritech Illinois understands that McLeod has no substantive objection to Ameritech Illinois' proposed offering on this issue. McLeod may desire to keep this issue "open" until that process is fully tested and deployed, but this proceeding obviously cannot be placed on hold until testing for every new process is completed.

ISSUE 56: Cooperative Testing: Loops

BACKGROUND

"Cooperative testing" is testing performed after maintenance on a CLEC's loop to make sure the loop has been repaired. *Id.* Ameritech Illinois has agreed to perform both acceptance testing and cooperative testing for xDSL-capable loops. Tr. 587.

DISCUSSION

The HEPO (at 92) directed Ameritech Illinois to address the three "goals" that NorthPoint claims the Commission should adopt with regard to Issue 56. NorthPoint contends that:

(1) Ameritech Illinois should conduct cooperative acceptance tests on at least 90% of all ADSL-capable loops by November 8, 2000.

(2) Ameritech Illinois should conduct cooperative acceptance tests on at least 90% of ISDN loops and maintenance tickets opened on ISDN loops by January, 2001.

(3) Ameritech Illinois should conduct cooperative acceptance tests on at least 90% of all maintenance tickets opened on ADSL-capable loops by November 8, 2000.

Because the proposed deadlines in (1) and (3) are long past and the deadline in (2) may also come before the Commission issues its final order, all three of these "goals" effectively boil down to the same issue: Should Ameritech Illinois be required to conduct cooperative testing on 90% of certain categories of loops by some Commission-imposed date certain?[7]

Ameritech Illinois is working diligently toward the goal of performing cooperative testing on 90% of ADSL loops. Ameritech Illinois also will work diligently to attain the same level of testing for ISDN loops, although everyone recognizes that this will be a new process that will require investment in new test sets and new training for the technicians who will perform the tests. However, the near-immediate deadlines proposed by NorthPoint would not allow adequate time to

[7] NorthPoint may propose new deadlines in its Exceptions. If it does, Ameritech Illinois reserves the right to respond to such new proposals in its Reply Brief on Exceptions.

attain those testing levels and to reach agreement on how the statistics should be captured and calculated. Ameritech Illinois would propose that if any deadline is adopted for the 90% levels it be in April of 2001. This will avoid interference with the March 2001 release and allow some time to get up to speed on testing ISDN loops.

ISSUE 62: Directory Listing Ordering and Inquiry

With respect to access to directory listing information for UNE loop customers, the HEPO states that the Commission "need[s] more information as to AI's cost, both in terms of labor and materials necessary to accomplish such a task." HEPO at 94. In response, Ameritech Illinois states that it has been discussing this issue with CLECs and believes that the parties are near an agreed resolution of the issue, which it is hoped will be finalized by the time of replies to exceptions.

III. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth herein, the Commission should revise the HEPO and find for Ameritech Illinois on the issues discussed herein.

Dated: November 29, 2000

Respectfully submitted,

ILLINOIS BELL TELEPHONE CO.

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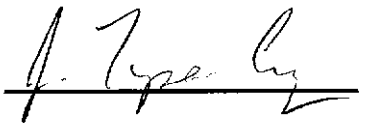
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, J. Tyson Covey, hereby certify that I caused copies of the Exceptions of Ameritech Illinois to Hearing Examiner's Proposed Order to be served on counsel for the parties in Docket 00-0592 by e-mail, messenger, overnight mail, and/or U.S. Mail, this 29th day of November, 2000.



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